

Standards in the context of Teacher Accreditation

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ABSTRACT

Language teachers are the pivot of policy. Unless teachers have adequate skills, the quality of their teaching will inevitably be inferior and policy itself will founder. This paper draws attention to how the most progressive of policies will founder without adequate attention to the quality and supply of language teachers.

The paper discusses the range of competencies needed in the specification of standards for language teachers but focusses especially on language proficiency, its description and assessment. In the Australian State of Queensland, the International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR[®]) have been used for some 25 years to assess the English proficiency of overseas trained teachers and, in adaptation, the proficiency of teachers of other languages. ISLPR[®] is an adaptive test widely used to measure general proficiency but it is readily applicable to the assessment of specific purpose proficiency and is used in the accreditation process not only of teachers but also of other professionals, especially nurses.

While referring to the range of competencies required by language teachers, the paper will also focus on cross-cultural attitudes both as a competency in itself for language teachers and the increasingly vital importance of teachers' being trained to demonstrate positive attitudes and to be able to foster them in their students through specifically designed languages education. This is an issue of paramount importance to worldwide education in the 21st century. The paper will report briefly on the outcomes of large scale projects in Australia and Japan examining the attitudes of foreign languages students and the factors in their courses that may have influenced them. Though most languages programmes whether for students or teachers, envisage cultural understanding and positive cross-cultural attitudes as primary goals, research demonstrates that language learning of itself does not lead to improved attitudes but rather a combination of methodological and course design features is necessary.

Implications are drawn for the design of language courses but especially for the training and specification of standards for language teachers.

THE PRESENTER

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I INTRODUCTION: Teachers as the Pivot of Policy

Language teachers are the pivot of policy [cf. ALLC 1996]. Unless teachers have adequate skills, the quality of their teaching will inevitably suffer and policy itself will founder. This was well illustrated during the period of significant development in language education policies in Australia from the early 1980s to 1996. Despite important developments in language and language education policies with the adoption of three major national policies [Lo Bianco 1987; DEET 1991, 1991a; COAG 1994] and progressive policies in every State and Territory [e.g. Ingram and John 1990], there was insufficient attention to the quality and supply of language teachers, the policies were less successful than they deserved, foreign language education itself failed to progress, and it was readily and further undermined with the advent in 1996 of a conservative (Liberal-National Party coalition) government which largely ignored language policy except to drastically reduce its funding. On the other hand, largely as a result of Australia's large scale immigration programme and, from the mid-1980s, strong interest in the export of education, there had been much stronger focus on teacher quality in the teaching of English as a second language, within both the migrant education programme and the ELICOS programme catering for the English needs of international students. Consequently, there was a rapid growth in the teaching of applied linguistics and in the provision of both undergraduate and postgraduate courses catering for teachers of all languages though, increasingly over the last decade, for ESL teachers.

Despite this mixed situation, during the 1990s, some of the State and national language education policies in Australia and various research reports had drawn attention to the need for improved standards for language teachers and, as a research paper, this paper will focus mainly around development and implementation activities in the context of language teacher standards and accreditation in which the present writer was involved during the height of the language policy era in Australian education. Within the range of linguistic and professional competencies required by language teachers, this paper will discuss the development of the *International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR)* and its use in specifying teachers' language skills [Ingram and Wylie

1979/1999, Wylie and Ingram]. The ISLPR® has been used for almost 30 years to assess the general proficiency of learners of English and other languages but it is an adaptive assessment procedure readily applicable to the assessment of specific purpose proficiency and proficiency in other languages and so has come to be used in vocational accreditation to certify the language skills, not only of teachers but also of other professionals, especially nurses.

While referring to the range of professional competencies required by language teachers, the paper will also focus on one element of those competencies that has become of paramount importance to worldwide education in the 21st century, viz. positive cross-cultural attitudes. The paper will report briefly on the outcomes of large scale projects in Australia and Japan examining the attitudes of foreign languages students and the factors in their courses that may have influenced them and thus have implications for teacher competencies. Though most languages programmes, envisage cultural understanding and positive cross-cultural attitudes as primary goals, research demonstrates that language learning of itself does not lead to improved attitudes but rather a combination of methodological and course design features is necessary.

The importance of being able to specify standards for language teachers arises from at least two factors: first, a review of education policies around the world demonstrates the almost universal recognition of the vital role that language education must play in the 21st century if people of all nations are to achieve both economic security and a harmonious and rewarding life within a context of world peace. The 2003 UNESCO document, *Education in a Multilingual World*, states:

Language is not only a tool for communication and knowledge but also a fundamental attribute of cultural identity and empowerment, both for the individual and the group. Respect for the languages of persons belonging to different linguistic communities therefore is essential to peaceful cohabitation. [UNESCO 2003: 16]

The document summarises the strong support that UNESCO provides for recognising the languages and cultures of all peoples, for ensuring that education policies and practices help all people to maintain their own languages and cultures, and provide opportunities for all persons to learn other languages and cultures, to learn to understand people of other racial, linguistic and cultural groups, and to develop positive intercultural attitudes. Citing some 13 international conventions adopted under the United Nations, it notes “certain basic guiding principles” common to all of them, including

2. *UNESCO supports bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies.*
3. *UNESCO supports language as an essential component of intercultural education in order to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights.*
[UNESCO 2003: 30]

In elaborating the third principle, the document goes on to say:

...the cultural component of language teaching and learning should be strengthened in order to gain a deeper understanding of other cultures; languages should not be simple linguistic exercises, but opportunities to reflect on other ways of life, other literatures, other customs. [UNESCO 2003: 33]

Numerous United Nations conventions also endorse the need for all people to live in a spirit of tolerance and for the education systems to promote that. The 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, for example, states in the Preamble that

... the child should be ... brought up ... in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity

while Article 29 says, in part, that all signatory States agree that the education of children should be directed at

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin ...

The 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is similar but refers specifically to education, stating in Article 26:

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and ... the maintenance of peace.

Almost every syllabus or national policy that one might survey supports these principles and identifies at least three central goals for language teaching: attaining practically useful levels of proficiency in one or more languages additional to one's first, the understanding of other cultures, and positive cross-cultural and intercultural attitudes. From the unlikely position as then head of the Australian Defence Forces, Cosgrove encapsulated those aims in observing the absolute primacy of language learning in achieving world peace and economic prosperity. He noted how all human beings have become "more interdependent" and that the "proliferation of linkages among nations is without precedence". He commented:

Our future prosperity and security will depend on our ability to understand .. [other] cultures and to build bridges to the citizens of .. [other] nations ...

Commercial links, alone, will never render war unthinkable. What will, however, are mutual understanding and respect and the banishing of prejudice. ...

If the future is to be one of peace and prosperity our kids will need the capacity to engage in a dialogue with others of different cultures and creeds. [Cosgrove 2002]

Secondly, however, such aspirations are meaningless unless language teachers have the necessary skills, first, to provide a model of the language they are teaching, to act as a model of the harmonious intercultural attitudes which the policies and curricula aspire to inculcate in students, and to have the skills (generally neglected in language teacher education programmes) to foster those attitudes in their students. A recent newsletter of the Australian Council of State School Organisations, the national organisation representing parents of children in Australian public (or State) schools, identified an Australian Language and Literacy Council publication [1996] as “the most perceptive and persuasive of all the ... national reviews of languages education” and cited the “letter of presentation” which accompanied the document to the then Federal Minister of Education. That letter emphasized the critical importance of language teachers and the standards of skills required if they are to teach successfully and achieve the national goals. It stated in part:

... The [Australian Language and Literacy] Council believes that achieving proficiency in other languages is one of the great learning experiences in the human condition. The key finding of the Council's investigation is that our education systems are consistently failing to deliver any worthwhile proficiency in languages. ...

The worst approach is the contemporary practice of setting extravagant and unachievable targets ... while failing to put in place strategies to ensure there are sufficient qualified and proficient teachers ...

The pivotal element of this Advice is the teacher. ...

[Cited from Peter Laver's “Letter of Presentation” in *Languages Education in Australia*, Volume One Number Thirteen, 25 October 2007: 5 – 6]

II THE NOTION OF STANDARDS

The term “standards” seems commonly to have at least two senses [cf. Ingram 2001]: first, it may imply some yardstick or framework against which learner performance, the content of tests and examinations, or the goals of courses may be measured. It was used in this sense to refer to the level of an examination in the Council of Europe's 1973 publication on a European unit/credit system for adult modern language learning, of which Trim said:

The multidimensional operational classification provides a framework for the analysis of the content and standard of existing and new examinations and tests and their placement in a system of equivalences. [Trim 1973: 23]

Later, Trim refers to “the hypothetical standard of the examination” in respect of such things as grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, appropriateness, range of comprehension, and fluency. [cf. Trim 1973: 24]

The *Common European Framework* [Education Committee, Council for Cultural Cooperation, Council of Europe 1996] seems to avoid the use of the term “standards”, speaking of a “framework of reference” and “scaling” to describe a systematic, comprehensive and coherent framework within which, amongst other things,

Learners, teachers, course designers, examining bodies and educational administrators [can] situate and coordinate their efforts ... [Education Committee, Council for Cultural Cooperation, Council of Europe 1996: 2]

It is a small but important step from this to the second basic sense in which “standards” is commonly used, where it carries some notion of what students ought to achieve at one level or another or for some purpose. So, for instance, the *Common European Framework* (or the scales within it) becomes a “standard” (or standards) when used to specify what learners should achieve at various levels, the content to be included in courses or examinations at particular levels, and the skills required for entry to, for example, particular professions. The setting of curriculum parameters and the specification of desired achievement levels inherent in some uses of the term “standards” is well caught in the “Curriculum and Standards Framework” in the Australian State of Victoria, where the Framework is described in these terms:

*The Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) ... describes what students **should know and be able to do** at various stages during the years Prep to Year 10. It provides sufficient detail for schools and the community to be clear about the major elements of curriculum and the **expected** outcomes. [Draft document received from the Victorian Board of Studies, dated 15 June, 1999. Mimeograph. (Present writer’s emphases)]*

Used in such ways, the term “standards” often acquires some administrative, political, and, sometimes, moralistic value, largely dependent on the purposes for which the standards are set. More positively, standards in this sense can specify the attributes required to practise a particular vocation.

In a major project to define “standards” for language teachers in Australia, the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA) defines standards as “statements of values about teaching, learning and knowing and the practices of those who teach languages and cultures”. Such a definition removes “standards” from the specification of attributes such as knowledge, skills and attitudes identified by a vocational registration or accreditation agency as necessary for the effective practice of the vocation and turns it into a more abstract notion of “values”. Indeed, as we shall see later, the “professional standards” described by the AFMLTA [2005] are somewhat vague and, rather than specify the minimum knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by language teachers, they are intended to be a sort of guide for teachers’ professional self-development. Their lack of specificity makes them less informative in the context of evaluating the quality of the teaching profession, for identifying specifications for vocational accreditation, or for the development of pre-service or continuing professional education.

The notion of a standard serves valuable purposes if it provides clear unambiguous guidelines, is set with some rational justification or for some valid purpose such as providing a curriculum framework, assisting in the development of syllabuses and work programmes, in interpreting and measuring student achievement in some valid, appropriate, and meaningful way, or in relation to the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for the effective practice of a vocation.

So, for example, a proficiency level may become a “standard” that learners must reach when it is specified for university entry or to meet a professional registration requirement such as for teacher accreditation. Such a “standard” may be objectively justifiable if, for instance, the proficiency specified is related to the sort of language behaviour routinely undertaken in carrying out the practical duties of a vocation whose performance “standards” a Vocational Registration Board has been established to regulate. So, for example, the Queensland College of Teachers, which is responsible for the accreditation of teachers in the Australian State of Queensland, requires overseas trained teachers seeking registration and employment in Queensland to have a proficiency in English of at least S:4, L:4, R:4, W:3+ as measured on the ISLPR[®]. The Queensland State Education Department requires LOTE teachers (i.e., teachers of a language other than English) to have the equivalent of ISLPR[®] 3 in all skills as measured by the Department’s own assessment procedure.

However, it is difficult to justify the notion of a “standard” if it is arbitrary, not obviously related to or explicable in terms of real language use or other vocational requirements, or if it is set as, for example, an arbitrary score on some arbitrarily chosen test to serve some administrative or political expediency. Some frameworks of reference exist as specifications of competencies that claim to be a statement of the micro- and macro-tasks that persons have to carry out in some vocation or other activity; in this they may provide a quite reasonable statement of observable language behaviour and other requirements to undertake the activity but they can become quite inappropriate if used as “standards” for purposes for which they were not designed or for which the fundamental requirements are quite different. So, for example, a set of vocational competency specifications that may quite accurately identify the skills and tasks required in the workplace need not be related to how language develops and is quite inappropriate for use in setting levels or “standards” in a sequence of language programmes or for reporting on learning outcomes other than in a flat non-developmental sense to state what vocational tasks the learners can carry out.

In the moralistic or political sense, the term “standards” has frequently been abused. Too often, the term becomes quite empty of “denotative meaning”, is used largely emotively with, at best, commonly recognised connotative meanings vaguely related to commonly held values, and is used for largely political purposes relating, at best, to some general notion of what people feel students should be achieving. Cynically, politicians seem to like to speak of “standards” so as to show their supposed concern for education and to make electors believe that they are “doing something” about education with little notion of what levels students are actually reaching, what levels it is reasonable to expect them to reach, or, least of all, what resources education requires if its “quality” is to be raised. In other instances where some notion of “standards” is quite appropriate and is in the interest of learners or other stakeholders, the level set as the “standard” may be arbitrary and only vaguely related, if at all, to the nature of language or of the language skills required for some purpose. So, for instance, in the case of university entry by overseas students, standards are too often determined by the gut-feeling of university admissions officers or avaricious marketing persons without consulting with or accepting the advice of anyone with knowledge of the tests used or what their results mean: so what may, in fact, be a

perfectly reasonable means of identifying language performance requirements and measuring and stating learner skills loses its reasonableness because the “standards” are set for other reasons such as administrative expediency irrespective of the students’ ability to perform academically. Equally reprehensible misuse of standards setting is seen where instruments appropriately used to set defensible “standards” in one area are used inappropriately in other areas because it is administratively convenient to do so. So, for instance, the use that has come to be made of the IELTS test for vocational registration (amongst many other purposes) is difficult to defend when it is understood that IELTS was designed specifically to measure the English language skills required for academic and training purposes in English-speaking institutions. That practice is, however, marginally less reprehensible than the practice of vocational registration boards which, again for reasons of administrative expediency, use IELTS (a test designed for second language learners) as a convenient, even if inappropriate, gatekeeper for overseas-trained native English-speaking applicants for, for example, registration as a medical practitioner in Britain.

If used simplistically as a framework of reference against which to evaluate language learning or the worth of other educational programmes, so-called “standards”, especially if arbitrarily determined, may over-simplify the educational, training and vocational registration process and lead to important skills, attitudes and other desirable features of education, training or vocational competency being ignored, especially those which may be more difficult to specify objectively, measure, or use in “standards setting”. So, for example, during the reign of the previous Australian government (the one that was defeated in the election held on 24 November this year), a moralistic emphasis on “standards” in reading and writing led to a narrowing of the curriculum, the downgrading of foreign language education, and complete disregard of the role of second language learning in fostering more positive cross-cultural and intercultural attitudes.

In brief, the notion of “standards” has both values and inherent dangers: “standards” can be of value when they relate to some meaningful aspect of language or other performance, when they relate to real needs in a society and hence in the education system serving those needs, or when they relate to the knowledge, skills and attitudes teachers require to work within that education system. If standards do meet such criteria and, ultimately, if they reflect real needs of the society, the education system and the teachers’ vocational tasks, they may provide useful frameworks within which vocational needs can be specified for the development of training curricula and for the identification of the attributes required for vocational accreditation purposes. To be valid and acceptable, “standards” in the context of language teacher accreditation must relate to the needs of the society, hence the goals of language teaching, and the skills needed by language teachers if they are to achieve those goals. They may, of course, relate to all aspects of the educational process from policy-making to teacher education, curriculum development and implementation but, in this paper, reference is made only to standards in the context of language teaching and language teacher accreditation.

III SPECIFYING STANDARDS

Standards are specified in many different ways. In some cases, they are specified in terms of the formal academic awards that teachers must hold. Thus, in Queensland, teachers are required to hold a minimum of a four year Bachelor degree in Education or a Bachelor degree plus a one or two year Diploma of Education. There is no specific requirement for methodology of language teaching though, as already noted, Education Queensland requires that its language teachers have their proficiency assessed with ISLPR[®] 3 being the equivalent requirement. Nevertheless, once employed, any teacher may be asked to teach a language and in too many cases do so [see the result of the survey of teachers' language proficiency and formal training in methodology in ALLC 1996, especially Chapter 3]. A recent Australian Senate committee recommended that trainee teachers have an undergraduate degree in their specialization and then undertake a postgraduate teaching qualification. In the same newspaper report, it was noted that recent OECD rankings for student performance were led by Finland where the minimum qualification for a teacher is reputedly a Masters degree [see Milanda Rout. 2007. "Teachers advised to obtain Masters". In *The Higher Education Supplement, The Australian*, Wednesday, 3 October, 2007: 25]. However, a degree of itself does not guarantee that a teacher possesses formal training in language teaching methodology and appropriate proficiency in the target language, nor, more specifically, the professional and linguistic competencies required to teach a foreign language effectively.

In 2005, following a nationally funded research and development project, the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA) produced a set of "Professional standards for accomplished teaching of languages and cultures" [AFMLTA 2005]. These "standards" are generalized statements about aspects of the knowledge and skills that were considered necessary for an "accomplished" language teacher to possess together with "suggested questions for reflection" related to the standards, which, presumably, would lead the individual teacher to identify the specific areas of knowledge or skill to include in a self-development programme. The introduction to the "standards" states:

Being an accomplished teacher of languages and cultures means being a person who knows, uses and teaches language and culture in an ethical and reflective way. It involves a continuous engagement with and commitment to learning, both as a teacher and as a life-long learner. It means more than teaching knowledge of languages and cultures and includes teaching learners to value, respect and engage with languages and cultures in their own lives and to interact with others across linguistic and cultural borders. It means creating a culture of learning which approaches language, culture and learning with respect, empathy, commitment, enthusiasm and personal responsibility. [AFMLTA 2005]

This statement is followed by a list of the "dimensions" which would be reflected in "accomplished languages and cultures teaching":

- *educational theory and practice*

- *language and culture*
- *language pedagogy*
- *ethics and responsibility*
- *professional relationships*
- *awareness of wider context* (subsequently entitled “active engagement with wider context”)
- *advocacy*
- *personal characteristics*

[AFMLTA 2005]

(Appendix One provides an illustrative excerpt from the AFMLTA’s “Professional Standards”.)

Elsewhere, the document provides guidelines for using the “standards”, in which the professional self-development role is emphasized, any notion of teacher evaluation is rejected, but it is affirmed that the intention is to “maintain and improve teaching quality” [AFMLTA 2005]:

The standards are designed to assist teachers to understand and develop their own practice. They are intended as a guide for thinking through one’s current professional work and identifying needs for future development. Any mismatch between a teachers’ current position and the standard then is to be seen as an opportunity for learning rather than as a failure to meet the standards expected of a teacher.

The standards are not designed or intended for use in evaluating teachers’ performance, but as a framework for understanding teachers’ professionalism. [AFMLTA 2005]

One could be cynical enough to observe that such “standards” are largely useless in identifying the probable level of expertise amongst the language teaching profession, it throws responsibility for any failure in the language teaching system on the teachers themselves, and it absolves the administrative and political authorities from any responsibility. It is not surprising that these non-standards were funded by and developed under a Federal Government that, for most of its 11 year tenure, had ignored language teaching except to cancel programme funding and to commission an excellent language policy review [Erebus Consulting Partners 2002], which it has also largely ignored (but note the much delayed and equally non-specific “national statement” on language learning [MCEETYA 2005]). Nevertheless, these standards potentially have value in motivating conscientious teachers to self-develop and the very directness of the “Suggested Questions for Reflection”, which accompany each of the dimensions, may assist teachers to plan their own self-improvement. In fact, the AFMLTA has subsequently undertaken a two-year national professional learning programme funded by the Federal Education Department for language teachers.

Another still nebulous set of standards for teachers is seen in the “national professional standards” currently under development in Australia by Teaching Australia, an organisation established by the Australian Government as the national body for the teaching profession [see Teaching Australia 2007]. To be fair, it should be noted that these standards are still under development and were published in March 2007 as a consultation paper for feedback [see Teaching

Australia 2007: 1]. These national professional standards are intended to incorporate the professional standards being developed by the discipline-specific organisations such as the AFMLTA's professional standards already discussed.

Teaching Australia's national professional standards are intended to serve three purposes, to:

- *provide inspiration to aspiring teachers and principals, clarifying the expectations of the profession about accomplished practice;*
- *offer guidance to members of the profession seeking to improve their practice through self-reflection and professional learning; and*
- *increase public understanding of the complexity and rigour of the work of teachers and principals.* [Teaching Australia 2007: 2]

They are not seen as replacing the standards promulgated by the various State and Territory teacher accreditation bodies in Australia, which is probably one reason why they do not provide the rigour of specification and adequacy discussed subsequently. Nevertheless, it is a useful document with similar limitations to the AFMLTA's professional standards which were probably developed in response to parameters set by Teaching Australia. The Teaching Australia model has four parts:

1. A charter for the teaching profession, which identifies a set of values for the profession which assert that teaching is a knowledge-based, collaborative, ethical, collegial, and responsible profession.
2. Organizing categories, which are professional knowledge, practice and commitment and from which the model branches into
3. Advanced teaching capabilities, on the one side, and school leadership capabilities, on the other. In the case of language teaching, the categories are the "dimensions" identified earlier in the AFMLTA professional standards.
4. There is also a category of "descriptors" for the specific teaching area, which, for language teachers, are the AFMLTA's professional standards [Teaching Australia 2007: 7; AFMLTA 2005].

These national professional standards are still under development. The strength of the activity is the involvement of teachers in the whole process though one has to hope that the final documents will go beyond aspirational "warm words" to identify also the specific competencies or attributes required by teachers and that they meet appropriate criteria for adequacy.

There is, in fact, no need for "standards" to be nebulous or to remain at the level of "warm words" and, indeed, if language programmes are responsive to the needs of the society and the individuals within it, it should be possible to identify quite specifically the minimum knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary. In this, the specification of standards for teacher accreditation is no different from and, indeed, is another example of the general applied linguistic paradigm. Though this cannot be discussed here, the present writer has written extensively about the applied linguistic paradigm [see Ingram 2003, 1980] and the model is

summarized in Figures 1 and 2 (for models of applied linguistics and language policy-making) and Figure 3 where the model has been applied to the specification of standards for language teachers. In brief, it is sufficient to note that the starting-point in applying the applied linguistic paradigm to the development of standards is societal and individual needs. In responding to these, one draws insight from the fundamental sciences into the attributes (specifically the knowledge, skills and attitudes) that a language teacher requires and which lead to the specification of “standards”, which are then evaluated through observation in practice. In this model of applied linguistics and its application to the specification of standards, three forms of “adequacy” are identified. To be *descriptively* adequate, they must accurately identify the nature and needs of the society, the implicit goals and therefore the minimum attributes or competencies (i.e., knowledge, skills and attitudes) required to be an effective language teacher. To be *prescriptively* adequate, the standards must identify the minimum array of competencies needed to be an effective language teacher or, at least, to carry out those tasks for the particular role the teacher has (e.g., class teacher, Department Head, curriculum developer, etc). To be *predictively* adequate, the array of competencies must be such as to predict the abilities needed as needs, situations and roles change and so identify the teacher’s likely ability to cope as those needs, situations or roles change. Such a model would suggest that, though completion of a course (e.g., holding a Bachelor of Education or a general Bachelor degree and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education) might be prescribed as prerequisite training for teacher accreditation, it does not ensure that the necessary competencies have been acquired though an adequate set of standards would provide guidance on desirable content to the designers of those courses.

This paper will now look at some more explicit standards developed under the present writer’s supervision some years ago. These “standards” were in two parts: language proficiency and detailed professional competencies.

IV LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS

IV.1 Expectations in Australia

Astonishingly, neither the AFMLTA professional standards nor the Teaching Australia standards make explicit or useful reference to language proficiency. The AFMLTA standards under the dimension “language and culture” seem to focus on formal knowledge and state:

Accomplished languages and cultures teachers ... have knowledge of the language(s) and culture(s) they teach which enables them to participate readily in interactions in the language in and out of the classroom ...

They have explicit knowledge and a working understanding of the linguistic and cultural systems of the language and how these systems work in the social lives of people. [AFMLTA 2005]

Clearly such “standards” leave open the level of proficiency that a teacher needs, the most specific indicator, “to participate readily in interactions”, could suggest a proficiency ranging from ISLPR[®] 1 (Basic Transactional Proficiency) to 4 (Vocational Proficiency) [Ingram and Wylie 1979/1999], it provides no clear basis

on which to decide whether a teacher has sufficient proficiency to model the language, and it is insufficient to provide a firm basis on which, for example, to argue for the allocation of resources for the upgrading of teachers' language skills.

In fact, policy-makers, employers and teacher registration authorities in Australia have been quite specific in their expectation of language skills, both of overseas trained teachers wishing to work as a teacher of any subject in Australian (English-based) schools and of teachers of languages other than English. Queensland led the way in this but most States and Territories now have similar policies. The policy paper which formed the basis of the Queensland language education policy recommended that all LOTE (or foreign language) teachers have a minimum proficiency of ISLPR[®] S:3, L:3, W:3, R:3 (Basic Vocational Proficiency) though teachers of languages with ideographic scripts could have 2 in Reading and Writing [Ingram and John 1990: Section VII.4, p. 49].

This recommendation was adopted by the State Government's employing authority, Education Queensland, though it modified the descriptors and adopted its own assessment procedures [see letter from the Department of Education, 16 September, 1993].

The most comprehensive review of language teacher quality and supply in Australia, the Australian Language and Literacy Council's *Language Teachers: The Pivot of Policy* [ALLC 1996], makes strong statements and recommendations on LOTE teachers' language proficiency. It states:

The quality of learning depends largely on the quality of the teacher who is the principal (often, the only) source of language experience available to the students in school. [ALLC 1996: 147]

The Council goes on to adopt the ISLPR[®] in the version developed specifically for language teachers as the basis for the specification of proficiency and states:

The existence of the generic scale for language teachers means that policy-makers and employing authorities can now set the desired level of proficiency for language teachers in accordance with the requirements of particular teaching contexts and the goals of their policies. It also provides a guide which assists language teacher educators to design language courses by clearly identifying specific proficiency targets. It is a valuable tool in helping to overcome the problems which result from a serious mismatch between aspirations of national and State and Territory language policies and the quality and supply of language teachers. [ALLC 1996: 150]

The Council's recommendation is that ISLPR[®] 4 in all four macroskills should be the standard of proficiency for language teachers and states:

... the Council is of the view that, ideally, all language teachers should have language proficiency at level 4 (vocational proficiency) for each of reading, writing, listening and speaking. [ALLC 1996: 149]

The strongest statements on proficiency standards in adopted national policies are contained in the national Asian language policy adopted in 1994 and basically written by the new (in 2007) Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, when he

was an officer in the Queensland Premier's Department [COAG 1994, especially pp. 108-111 and 127 - 129]. The policy document states:

The problems of language teacher competence and supply are critical to the overall effectiveness of these programs. ...

It is recommended that governments request Education ministers to develop ...

A minimum agreed national standard for Asian languages teachers which would see all future teachers of Asian languages attaining minimum levels of proficiency. [COAG 1994: 127, 129]

Though specific levels are not stated for teachers, it is significant that the minimum level proposed for Year 12 students to attain is the equivalent of ISLPR[®] 2 (Basic Social Proficiency) with some attaining at least ISLPR 3 (Basic Vocational Proficiency) [COAG 1994: 109] and hence the teachers' proficiency would need to be higher and probably at least ISLPR[®] 4.

In establishing English language proficiency requirements for non-native English speakers trained overseas, the Queensland College of Teachers (formerly the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration) has set a minimum English proficiency requirement of IELTS 7 in all four macroskills or ISLPR[®], S:4, L:4, R:4, W: 3+. This policy was first adopted in August 1980 but has subsequently been endorsed in legislation. The College's webpage states:

Under the "Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005", to be eligible for registration, a person must meet other requirements for professional practice prescribed ... The "Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Regulation 2005" specifies the following as a requirement for professional practice:

"The ability to communicate in spoken and written English at a professional level with students, parents, teachers and other persons."

Under QCT policy, ... the College normally requires recent International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores of at least 7 in each of the areas of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening or scores of 4 for Speaking, Listening, Reading and 3+ for Writing on the International Second Language Proficiency test (ISLPR[®]) administered by ... ISLPR[®] Language Services, Eight Mile Plains [see http://www.qct.edu.au/teacher-registration/registration_reqs_pt3.aspx, accessed 9 November, 2007].

IV.2 The ISLPR[®] in Language Proficiency Standards

In discussing research and policy development in language teacher proficiency standards in Australia, reference has been made to the use of the *International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR[®])* [Ingram and Wylie 1979/1999], which, over the years since it was first released in January 1979, has become the norm for the statement of language proficiency in Australia.

The ISLPR® is a scale that essentially describes how a second or foreign language develops from zero to native-like proficiency. In the simplest sense, it seeks to capture the intuitions that speakers have about language ability and, through the descriptors, to constrain the intuitive judgements that people make about others' language ability in order to achieve some commonality in the judgements and in how the levels are stated. The ISLPR® provides performance descriptions couched in terms of the practical tasks that learners can carry out and how they carry them out at nine points along the continuum from zero to native-like proficiency (with another three undescribed points available for use). Appendix Two lists the twelve proficiency levels and their descriptive titles and provides a list of the various versions of the ISLPR® while Appendix Three provides examples of proficiency descriptors for two macroskills.

One of the main reasons for the development of the ISLPR® was to increase the authenticity of language proficiency assessment. Most tests leave a serious gap between candidates' performance on language tests and their ability to use the language in real-life situations. The aim of the ISLPR® approach is to elicit the candidate's real language behaviour using realistic language tasks and to match that behaviour against scaled descriptions of real-life behaviour described in terms of the tasks that learners can carry out and how they carry them out (i.e., using what language forms). This important issue of authenticity and how the ISLPR® differs from such other major tests as IELTS has been discussed at length elsewhere [see Ingram 2003b].

The ISLPR® is presented in three columns. The first column is a general description that is similar, if not quite identical, from version to version since, no matter the language or the variety in which proficiency is being measured, the broad developmental path is similar and the levels identify the same ability and developmental stages across languages irrespective of the time taken to achieve it. The second column provides examples of specific language tasks and of how they are carried out, while the third is a comment column that defines terms or briefly explains concepts.

The ISLPR® was initially developed in the context of the teaching and learning of English as a second language in Australia but, from the outset, it was also trialled and used with other languages, and in contexts beyond Australia (e.g., in China, Singapore, Brunei, the Cocos Islands, the United States, Kiribati, and East Timor). It has been adopted very widely in Australia, used with many different languages, applied in many different learning situations, and many different versions for different purposes have been produced (see Appendix Two). Since 1978, a great deal of research and development effort has gone into the ISLPR®. The scale in all its versions has been subjected to continual re-evaluation and amendment as the other versions have been developed. The ISLPR® and its related assessment procedures constitute a highly adaptive approach to proficiency assessment so that the basic scale and the basic assessment procedure can readily be applied to the assessment of any language and for any specified purpose. However, it has also been advantageous to produce versions of the scale in specific languages or for specific purposes; versions have been produced, for example, for French, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, and Indonesian. Exemplar specified purposes versions have been produced for ESL for Business, Engineering, and Academic Purposes, there is a generic version for stating the

proficiency of second or foreign language teachers, and there is a specific version for use with teachers of Indonesian. The ISLPR[®] has also been applied to the assessment of proficiency in signed languages with a version by Des Power and Breda Carty for Australian Sign Language (Auslan). In addition, several different versions of the ISLPR[®], of differing levels of complexity, have been produced for self-assessment purposes.

This on-going development work has led to the continual re-evaluation of the basic scale, the assumptions underlying it, and the ways in which proficiency levels are described in the different types of scales. Formal evaluations and extensive usage have allowed the authors to assess the validity of the descriptors, the reliability of the assessment procedures, and, therefore, the reliability of the descriptors and their differentiations.

Few scales have adopted such a long and detailed process for their development and on-going re-development and validation. The ISLPR[®] is the product of almost 30 years of continual formal and informal trialling, feedback from use and, through the many versions, the continual and intensive re-examination of the descriptors. Even the most elaborated scales are partial descriptions of how a language develops and their validity depends heavily on the processes by which they have been developed. In the case of the ISLPR[®] and its various versions, the original and on-going development process consists of the following:

1. A notion of proficiency related to the language tasks that can be carried out and how they are carried out was adopted and evolved as the scale developed.
2. Drawing on their intuitions and experience in teaching different languages, the authors sketched descriptions of language behaviour and how it develops.
3. The initial descriptors were then tested out, elaborated and refined in interviews with learners throughout the proficiency span, a process that has continued over the years in the course of developing and using the different versions of the scale.
4. At the same time, the emerging scale has been continually compared with evidence from psycholinguistics to assess whether it is compatible with those general findings.
5. The scale has been formally trialled several times using adult and adolescent learners, especially of English but also of other languages [see Ingram 1984]. These trials were conducted with both native English-speaking raters across Australia and non-native speakers in China. This formal trialling essentially assumed that, if the series of descriptors making up the scale really did reflect second or foreign language development, if they described features of the language that generally do co-occur, and if they were comprehensible and manageable, teachers trained to use the scale would be able to interpret and apply the descriptors consistently and reliably.

6. Statistical processing has also been used to check both the validity and reliability of the assessment procedures and the adequacy of the scale itself in both the formal trials just referred to and in other studies [e.g., Ingram 1984, Lee 1993]. In one study, Lee analysed the results of more than 300 assessments on each of the four macroskills conducted in a centre where the teacher assessors were thoroughly trained and monitored in the use of the ISLPR[®]. He found only one misfitting assessment in one macroskill and concluded that the scale and its use by trained assessors had a high degree of validity and reliability [see Lee 1993].

The standard means by which the ISLPR[®] is used to measure the proficiency of learners is in a face-to-face interview in which each learner's language is elicited and matched against the scale's behavioural descriptions. In recent years, however, the scale has also been increasingly used to interpret scores on more traditional forms of assessment and so complementary tests exist with, for example, the version for teachers of Indonesian.

The ISLPR[®] has been, for nearly thirty years, the standard means for the statement of proficiency in Australia. It is used in many different contexts ranging from education and the interpretation of test results to specifying migration regulations, in law courts, in classifying library material, and in specifying the language skills required for vocational registration for teaching, nursing, and other vocations.

To specify standards of language proficiency for language teachers, the *International Second Language Proficiency Ratings – Version for Second Language Teachers* was developed in collaboration with a wide-ranging research group including practising language teachers, professional associations of language teachers, curriculum specialists and teacher educators [Wylie and Ingram 1995]. Unlike the general proficiency version, which describes the proficiency span from zero to native-like, the *ISLPR[®] for Second Language Teachers* goes only from ISLPR[®] 2 (Basic Social Proficiency) to 5 (Native-like Proficiency) since the authors and their research group considered that persons with proficiency levels below 2 should not be permitted to teach. Each descriptor in each of the four macroskills describes language behaviour observed at that level, provides a list of the tasks that a language teacher must undertake in the target language, and reflects the roles and activities of language teachers and their capacities at each level. These tasks include classroom tasks, everyday social and transactional tasks, and, at the higher levels, the tasks that occur in professional development contexts. The *ISLPR[®] for Second Language Teachers* is available from ISLPR Language Services, Level 1, Office Suites, Shopping Centre, cnr Padstow & Warrigal Roads, Eight Mile Plains, Queensland, 4113, Australia.

V PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The approach adopted to the specification of professional (i.e., pedagogical) standards in a project conducted under the supervision of the present writer was to identify in specific detail the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by

language teachers in performing their tasks as second language teachers. The specific project focussed on the tasks undertaken by teachers of second or foreign languages though there is no obvious reason why they are not equally applicable to teachers of ESL/EFL. Like the language proficiency standards, the professional standards were developed in collaboration with a wide-ranging research group of practising language teachers, professional associations for language teachers, curriculum specialists and teacher educators. The aim of the project was to identify and clearly specify the minimum competencies required by language teachers in carrying out their everyday teaching-related tasks.

The minimum competencies required by language teachers were seen to include professional (i.e., pedagogical) skills, knowledge and attitudes. These standards are too extensive and too detailed to be reported here and only the broad overall headings will be presented [see Commins 1995 for the full version]. The standards were broken down into five broad areas of competence covering knowledge, tasks involved in actual classroom practice, and interpersonal skills and attitudes:

1. Using and developing professional knowledge and values
2. Communicating, interacting and working with students and others
3. Planning and managing the teaching and learning process
4. Monitoring and assessing student progress and learning outcomes
5. Reflecting, evaluating and planning for continuous improvement

[Commins 1995: 27 – 37]

Within each of these areas, further elements of competence were identified, allowing for a broad categorisation of the area of competence and clarification of what is involved in each area. Each element is essentially a broad description indicating the properties of the minimum performance (i.e., the standard) expected of language teachers. They are further elaborated and clarified by the addition of “cues” or concrete referents to exemplify activities or attributes of the competency under headings relating to the area of language education in which the teacher might work. Thus, these “cues” are identified under the headings “Core”, Primary, Secondary, Immersion, University, and Vocational. The elements of each area of competence identified as providing the minimum standards for second language teachers are shown below:

AREA OF COMPETENCE 1: USING AND DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND VALUES.

ELEMENTS:

i) Use of the LOTE

The teacher communicates effectively in the LOTE through listening, speaking, reading and writing.

ii) Knowledge about the LOTE

The teacher has an explicit knowledge of the LOTE's linguistic, sociolinguistic and discoursal features.

iii) Cross-Cultural Values

The teacher models and encourages favourable cross-cultural attitudes and behaviours.

iv) Cultural Understandings

The teacher displays sensitivity to and some knowledge of a culture(s) associated with the LOTE and understands how the values and world view are expressed through the language.

v) Goals of LOTE Learning

The teacher has some appreciation of the wider educational goals of LOTE learning.

vi) Understandings about Learning

The teacher has some understanding of how students learn at different stages.

vii) Understandings about Second/Foreign Language Learning

The teacher has some understanding of how second/foreign languages are learned.

viii) Understandings about Language Teaching Methodologies

The teacher has some understanding of the principles of language teaching methodological approaches and uses language teaching processes appropriate to the learning goals.

ix) Ethical and Legal Requirements

The teacher operates from an appropriate ethical position and within the framework of law and regulation affecting teachers' work.

AREA OF COMPETENCE 2: COMMUNICATING, INTERACTING AND WORKING WITH STUDENTS AND OTHERS.**ELEMENTS:****i) Communication with Students**

The teacher communicates effectively with students.

ii) Responding to Individuals

The teacher recognises and makes some responses to individual needs and differences.

iii) Managing Behaviour

The teacher consistently models and encourages positive behaviour.

iv) Working in Teams

The teacher works effectively with teachers, ancillary staff and others in groups and teams.

v) Developing Professional and Community Contacts.

The teacher values communication with school or institution support staff, the profession and with the wider community, including the LOTE speaking community.

AREA OF COMPETENCE 3: PLANNING AND MANAGING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

ELEMENTS:

i) Planning Courses and Units

The teacher plans purposeful learning programs that aim for the outcome of fluent and accurate student communication in the LOTE, cultural awareness and sensitivity, and other learning outcomes in accordance with specific curriculum requirements.

ii) Planning for Specific Groups of Learners

During planning, the teacher chooses language content and language teaching approaches appropriate to student development and learning and to the interactive nature of language.

iii) Implementing Language Programs

The teacher implements effective language programs which motivate and engage learners.

iv) Responding Flexibly

The teacher demonstrates some awareness of the need for flexibility and responsiveness.

v) Fostering Learning Skills

The teacher demonstrates some awareness of the need to foster independent and cooperative learning.

AREA OF COMPETENCE 4: MONITORING AND ASSESSING STUDENT PROGRESS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

ELEMENTS:

i) Understandings about Assessment

The teacher has some understanding of the educational basis and nature and role of assessment in teaching of LOTE.

ii) Assessing LOTE Learning

The teacher uses effective assessment strategies that take account of the relationships between the objectives of LOTE teaching, learning and assessment.

AREA OF COMPETENCE 5: REFLECTING, EVALUATING AND PLANNING FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

ELEMENTS:

i) Reflecting on Practice

The teacher critically reflects on his/her own practice on a regular basis to improve the quality of LOTE teaching and learning programs.

ii) Developing as a Professional

The teacher values and takes some opportunities to develop her/his own LOTE proficiency, cultural awareness and pedagogic knowledge and to critically consider LOTE initiatives.

[These extracts, re-produced from ALLC 1996: 151 - 153, were summarised from Commins 1995: 27 - 37.]

Clearly the development of competency specifications for language teachers can make a major contribution to quality assurance and the specification of professional or pedagogical standards for language teachers. They provide a rigorous way in which to identify, specify and evaluate the minimum skills that language teachers require in order to provide high quality language programmes. Thus, they can also assist substantially in the development of pre-service and on-going language teacher education programmes.

The Australian Language and Literacy Council extended the discussion of professional standards for language teachers to specify basic requirements for pre-service and on-going professional development programmes. These basic requirements, the Council stated, include:

- *Nationally agreed minimum vocational competencies ... as the minimum goals for preservice language teacher education programs...*
- *Understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of language teaching and hence*
 - *knowledge of how language is learned and the psycholinguistic, psychological and sociolinguistic factors that affect language learning;*
 - *knowledge of the theory of language (hence general and theoretical linguistics, phonology and phonetics, sociolinguistics, and the other relevant components of a comprehensive view of the nature of language);*
 - *specific knowledge of the linguistic system of the target language (including a pedagogical grammar of it);*

- *knowledge of the basic principles of language teaching methodology (including curriculum and syllabus design, methods, and assessment).*
- *Knowledge and understanding of the target culture.*
- *Cross-cultural attitudes favourable to life and teaching in a racially, culturally and linguistically diverse society and world.*
- *Practical ability to apply rationally the foregoing understanding of the nature of language teaching to language teaching situations at any school level, whether in the classroom or elsewhere.*
- *Understanding of the actual and potential role of languages and language education in .. education and in responding to the needs of individuals and [the] society as a whole.*
- *Ability to reflect rationally (and from a sound information base) on language teaching and [teachers'] own teaching activities, to evaluate them, and to assist these reflective processes with their own research.*
- *Commitment to, and the necessary knowledge and skills to enable on-going professional self-development.*
- *Commitment to their profession and its advancement (which may take a variety of forms, including involvement in relevant professional associations, publications, and conferences).*

[ALLC 1996: 159 - 160].

VI FROM STANDARDS TO TEACHING PRACTICE

A major project undertaken over the last decade illustrates the importance of clearly identifying and applying teacher standards if language teaching is to achieve the goals that are set for it in worldwide language education policies and curricula and if language teachers are to achieve the goals that they themselves set. Earlier (Section I), it was noted that language education policies and syllabuses almost universally identify the attainment of language proficiency and the enhancement of cross-cultural and intercultural attitudes as two of the central goals of second or foreign language education [see also Ingram 2007, 2005, 2003, 2002, 2001/2002, 2000, 2000a]. When surveyed, language teachers tend to express similar goals but examination of their methodology and the teaching outcomes suggests that, in practice, the reality may be quite different.

A major project was undertaken in socially and educationally contrasting contexts in Brisbane, Australia, and Akita Prefecture, Japan, to identify the cross-cultural attitudes of Year 10 students and what relationship their attitudes might have to their language learning experiences [see Ingram 2007, 2005, 2002, 2001/2002; Ingram *et al* 2003; Ingram *et al* 1999; Ingram and O'Neill 2000; Ingram *et al* forthcoming]. The project also sought to identify, on the one hand, what the

teachers saw as their preferred goals and methodology and, on the other, what students saw as the main teaching-learning activities and their own preferred learning activities. In Australia, the subjects were 598 Year 10 students and their 24 teachers in urban schools in and around Brisbane. For most (87%), English was the home language but another 25 languages were also spoken at home. Almost half the students had learned Japanese with French and German the next most frequent languages. The social context was multicultural. In Japan, the project surveyed 630 students and their 47 teachers in 10 urban and less urban schools in Akita prefecture. All the students were learning English, for most, Japanese was the home language and the social context was less culturally diverse than in Australia.

In brief, though most syllabuses around the world and, in particular, the ones followed by the teachers in the project identify more positive cross-cultural attitudes and the attainment of language proficiency as central goals of language teaching, in fact, the project found in both countries a considerable mismatch between what the syllabuses espouse, what teachers see as their goals and what they actually do in the classrooms, and what the students believe is happening and want to happen. One also had to conclude that, despite the almost universal aim of language learning programs to foster cultural understanding and more positive cross-cultural attitudes, language learning *per se* does not achieve this and, if it is to have a positive effect on cross-cultural attitudes and attain useful levels of language proficiency, certain elements of methodology and course design and, even more importantly, a certain combination of the key elements of methodology are critically important. Thus, there were clear implications for teaching skills and other teacher attributes and, therefore, for features to be identified in teacher standards.

The detailed outcomes of the study are too long to be discussed in this paper but are available in the references above and will be summarised only very briefly here.

In the Japan study, the teachers' preferred goals largely reflected the national priorities as set in the national language policies and curricula at the time [see Toyama 2003, 2003a, 2003b, 2002; MEXT 2002, 2001]. There was strong consensus that the most important goal is to communicate orally with native speakers of English while the goal of cross-cultural understanding was the next most frequently supported though most goals related to cross-cultural attitudes were not rated highly. However, in response to questions concerning the actual teaching activities used, the teachers gave strong priority to "traditional", formal methods, communicative activities and activities designed to promote practical proficiency were ranked quite low, and more innovative activities such as language clubs, language evenings, camps, games and the internet were rarely, if ever, used. In particular, activities known to be more effective in prompting attitudinal change, especially the more informal activities encouraging social interaction outside of the classroom, were virtually never used. In summary, the teachers' main attention in their actual teaching, their practical perception of what they should do in their classrooms, focussed on formal knowledge and "traditional" methods rather than creative or productive use of the language in interaction. Their preferred teaching and learning activities were largely formal, teacher-centred, and "traditional" with relatively few opportunities given to

students to use the language creatively, informally or in uncontrolled situations for normal social interaction (or in situations that approximate to such interaction). Similarly, those activities most conducive to balanced cultural understanding and positive cross-cultural attitudes (other than formal “teaching of culture”) were also rare. Thus, what the teachers actually did in the classroom contrasted sharply with the goals and activities of the national strategic plan, the Ministerial policy statements, and their current curriculum documents. Without going into similar detail for the Brisbane study, it is sufficient to note that the outcomes were similar.

In both studies, the students saw their teaching-learning experience as largely formal, more closely reflecting what the teachers were actually doing than their aspirational goals. They were quite positive towards language learning and towards other cultures and their overall cross-cultural attitudes were generally positive. The activities they saw as being used most frequently were largely formal learning or “traditional” activities, focussing on the formal learning of grammar and vocabulary, reading comprehension and pronunciation. Overall, despite the syllabuses in both countries, the students’ perception of their learning experiences could not be considered “communicative” but dominated by formal learning focussing on the forms of the language rather than on communication. When asked what they would most like to change in their language programmes, the students expressed strong support for more communicative activities and culture learning with more time for learning the language for everyday purposes and talking with native speakers.

In neither study, did there emerge any significant evidence that students’ involvement in language learning, specifically the duration of their language learning since all students in the study had learned another language at some time, had had much influence on their cross-cultural attitudes. However, it was also evident that the nature of their programmes and especially the activities favoured by their teachers were not conducive to the fostering of more positive cross-cultural attitudes and background variables were probably more influential. At the same time, the changes that the students in both Brisbane and Akita wanted to see in their programmes tended to be towards activities that are known from the research literature to be likely to be more beneficial for the development of both language proficiency and cross-cultural attitudes. Other studies undertaken by the present author implementing such methodologies and, in particular, emphasising interaction with native speakers and specific consideration of intercultural relations and attitudes as core aspects of methodology and course design, have demonstrated a positive effect on both cross-cultural attitudes and proficiency development [e.g., Ingram 2003a; 1980a, b, c].

VII CONCLUSION

If the needs of society and the resultant goals of language education, including the almost universal aims of developing practical levels of language proficiency and fostering more positive cross-cultural and intercultural attitudes, are to be implemented and achieved, it is essential that language teaching methodology and course design be designed specifically to achieve those aims. In turn,

language teachers need the necessary attributes, the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, to enable them to implement the policies and methodology. They also need to acquire the action research skills that will enable them to self-monitor and self-evaluate their teaching so as to ensure a closer match between the goals of the language policies and curricula that they are implementing and that they themselves espouse and their actual classroom practice. Clearly, the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes must be seen as critical elements of the standards expected of language teachers and be incorporated into their pre-service and on-going training programmes. Vague aspirational statements such as we have seen (and discussed earlier) in some of the most recent standards development activities in Australia will not achieve this but standards need seriously to consider the needs of the society, the contributions that language education can make to meeting those needs, and to delineate as clearly as possible the attributes language teachers require in order to satisfy the educational goals and the societal needs. Those standards are not, of course, static; the model proposed earlier for the development of standards would suggest that, as the needs of society change and as our understanding of the factors that determine the principles and goals of language education evolve, so our understanding of the attributes required of a language teacher and hence of language teacher standards should also evolve with corollary implications for pre-service and on-going language teacher education.

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APPENDIX ONE

Excerpt from *Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of Languages and Cultures* [AFMLTA 2005]

(Language) Teacher Standards	
<p>Educational theory and practice</p> <p>Accomplished languages and cultures teachers have knowledge of child/learner development appropriate to the level at which they teach and apply this knowledge in all aspects of their teaching.</p> <p>They engage with current theories of education, general principles of teaching and learning, and classroom management. They keep up to date with developments in the field of education through professional learning and professional reading.</p> <p>They are aware of the culture of schooling in the contexts in which they teach. They actively engage with education policies, and curriculum frameworks. They are able to locate languages within a wider educational context, creating connections with other curriculum areas and with extracurricular activities.</p>	<p>Suggested questions for reflection</p> <p>What do you know about the individual learners you teach and their capabilities?</p> <p>How comprehensively do you understand the discipline, traditions and debates in language and culture teaching?</p> <p>What is the culture of the school in which you teach?</p> <p>What do you know about the policy and curriculum documents which are relevant to language teaching?</p> <p>How do you make connection with other curriculum areas and with extra curricular interests?</p>
<p>Language and culture</p> <p>Accomplished languages and cultures teachers are both users and teachers of linguistic and cultural knowledge.</p> <p>They have knowledge of the language(s) and culture(s) they teach which enables them to participate readily in interactions in the language in and out of the classroom. In addition, they have a developed intercultural awareness and know how to communicate across languages and cultures.</p> <p>They are actively involved in maintaining</p>	<p>Suggested questions for reflection</p> <p><i>How do you express your intercultural awareness in teaching and in daily life?</i></p> <p><i>How do you use and develop your language abilities?</i></p> <p><i>What sorts of language-based activities are you involved in outside the classroom?</i></p> <p><i>What sorts of contacts do you have with target language communities, personally or through reading, the media or the</i></p>

<p>and developing their knowledge of the language and culture they teach and seek out opportunities to use their knowledge and to keep up to date with how the language and culture are used in target language communities.</p> <p>They have explicit knowledge and a working understanding of the linguistic and cultural systems of the language and how these systems work in the social lives of people.</p> <p>They understand the relationship between language and culture and have an awareness and understanding of the role of language and culture in human interaction and identity. They use this knowledge to enhance their teaching.</p>	<p><i>web/internet?</i></p> <p><i>What recent activities have you undertaken to develop your language and cultural knowledge of the language you teach?</i></p> <p><i>How do you deal with issues of identity in your teaching (including your own identity)?</i></p> <p><i>How do you encourage learners to see the world from other cultural perspectives?</i></p> <p><i>What messages do your students take away from their experience of language learning about the relationship between language, culture and learning?</i></p>
<p>Language pedagogy</p> <p>Accomplished teachers have a developed understanding of the language learning process. Their understanding comes from their formal and informal learning about teaching and learning and also from their own experiences of being a language learner and user, either of the language they teach or of another language.</p> <p>They have knowledge of current developments in language learning and teaching research and develop their knowledge further by engaging in professional learning, professional reading and/or research.</p> <p>They use their knowledge of language and culture in order to promote learning in ways which are appropriate for learners in context and which cater for the diversity of abilities among their students, using authentic language and resources.</p> <p>They create a culture of learning in their classrooms which fosters interest in languages and cultures and encourages learners to accept responsibility for their own learning.</p> <p>They have at their disposal a range of methodologies for languages and cultures</p>	<p><i>Suggested questions for reflection</i></p> <p><i>What knowledge about patterns of development in language and second language literacy inform your curriculum and teaching decisions?</i></p> <p><i>What recent activities have you undertaken to develop your knowledge of language teaching?</i></p> <p><i>What sorts of language-based activities are you involved in your professional learning?</i></p> <p><i>How have you applied your recent learning to enhance your language teaching?</i></p> <p><i>How do you promote interest in languages and cultures in the classroom?</i></p> <p><i>How do you decide on which methodology to use in your daily teaching? What factors influence your decisions?</i></p> <p><i>How do you adapt your teaching to your learners and to the material you are teaching?</i></p> <p><i>How do you explain your reasons for using a particular pedagogical approach in your teaching?</i></p>

teaching and in their practice select from these in a principled way, taking into consideration the learners, the learning context, curriculum goals, and the aspect of language being taught. These choices are made at both the overall level of planning and in teaching in the classroom.

They have a view of curriculum in which planning, teaching, resourcing, assessing, evaluating and renewing are done coherently according to a principled approach to languages and cultures teaching. Accomplished teaching is reflected by an ability to explain the choices being made in planning and teaching.

Their approach to assessment examines understanding, learning, and performance, and uses assessment to foster learning as well as to evaluate learning. They know and use a range of assessment approaches and select assessment tasks which are appropriate to the purposes of the assessment and use the assessment for effective feedback and reporting.

They are informed and critical users of technology in language teaching and use technology both to support learning and as a basis for learning to communicate using technologies.

What range of learning opportunities do you provide so that all students are able to achieve optimum success and recognition for their performance in language and literacy?

How do you assess learner's language development? How does this allow them to demonstrate their proficiency in the language and their intercultural understanding?

How do you decide which assessment approach to use? What factors influence your decisions?

How do you use technology in your teaching? What factors influence your decisions?

[Extract from AFMLTA 2005]

Other "dimensions" in the Standards are: ethics and responsibility, professional relationships, awareness of wider context (subsequently entitled "active engagement with wider context"), advocacy, and personal characteristics.

APPENDIX TWO

The International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR®)

The International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR®) were initially developed by Elaine Wylie and D. E. Ingram in 1978 and first published in January 1979 as the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ASLPR). The basic scale is designed to measure general proficiency or practical language skills in real-life language contexts in second or foreign language learners. The scale consists of 12 levels from zero to native-like, numbered from zero to 5 as shown below. The scale is presented in three columns: the first column provides a “General Description of Language Behaviour” and is almost identical across all versions of the scale, the second provides “Examples of Language Behaviour” and is specific to the particular version of the scale, and the third is a “Comment” column that explains, gives definitions and draws attention to critical features of the descriptor or level.

The ISLPR® is now administered through ISLPR® Language Services, Level 1, Office Suites, Shopping Centre, cnr Padstow & Warrigal Roads, Eight Mile Plains, Queensland, 4113, Australia (email: info@islpr.org) from which copies may be purchased.

The outcome of using the ISLPR® for the assessment of a second or foreign language learners’ proficiency is a profile showing the rating for each macroskill separately, e.g., S:3, L:3+, R:2+, W:2. The levels in each of Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing are identified with a number and a short descriptive title as follows:

0	Zero Proficiency	e.g., S:0, L:0, R:0, W:0
0+	Formulaic Proficiency	
1-	Minimum ‘Creative’ Proficiency	
1	Basic Transactional Proficiency	
1+	Transactional Proficiency	e.g., S:1+, L:1+, R:1+, W:1+
2	Basic Social Proficiency	
2+	(unnamed)	
3	Basic ‘Vocational’ Proficiency	
3+	(unnamed)	
4	‘Vocational’ Proficiency	e.g., S:4, L:4, R:4, W:4

- 4+ (unnamed)
- 5 Native-like Proficiency

Ingram and Wylie have worked on the ISLPR® virtually continuously since 1978. It has been formally trialled in a number of different contexts and has been applied and re-developed in a number of different versions listed below. It is now the most widely used instrument for the specification of proficiency levels in Australia, it is used in many places around the world, and it has significantly influenced proficiency scale development elsewhere (e.g., the *ACTFL Guidelines*).

The ISLPR® currently exists in the following versions (NB. See the note below concerning the name change to “International ...”):

- *The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings - Master General Proficiency Version (English Examples)*. Brisbane: Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages, Griffith University, 1979/1995/1999. ISBN 0 86857 814 2. Co-author Elaine Wylie
- *The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings - General Proficiency Version for English*. Brisbane: Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages, Griffith University, 1979/1985/1995/1999. ISBN 0 86857 815 0. Co-author Elaine Wylie
- *The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings - Version for Teachers of Indonesian*. Brisbane: Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages, Griffith University, 1996. ISBN 0 86857 819 3. Co-authors Elaine Wylie and Geoff Woollams
- *The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings - General Proficiency Version for Indonesian*. Brisbane: Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages, Griffith University, 1995. ISBN 0 86857 816 9. Co-authors Elaine Wylie and Geoff Woollams
- *The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings - Version for Second Language Teachers*. Brisbane: Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages, Griffith University, 1995. ISBN 0 86857 817 7. Co-author Elaine Wylie
- *The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings - English for Business and Commerce Version*. Brisbane: Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages, Griffith University, 1995. Co-authors Elaine Wylie and Hilda Maclean
- *The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings - English for Engineering Purposes Version*. Brisbane: Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages, Griffith University, 1995. Co-authors Elaine Wylie and Laura Commins

- *The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings - English for Academic Purposes Version*. Brisbane: Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages, Griffith University, 1995. Co-authors Elaine Wylie and Catherine Hudson
- *The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings - Version for Japanese*. Brisbane: Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages, Griffith University, 1994. Co-authors Elaine Wylie and Peter Grainger
- *The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings - Version for French*. mimeograph. 1981. Co-authors Elaine Wylie and Edwige Coulin
- *The Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings - Version for Italian*. mimeograph. 1981. Co-authors Elaine Wylie and Carlo Zincone
- Various self-assessment versions ranging from very short, simplified versions administered by telephone to computer-based versions, and versions used with language teachers.

The ISLPR[®] was originally named the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ASLPR). In 1997, the ASLPR was re-named the International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR[®]) in reflection of its growing international usage and to emphasize its appropriateness to any country, to any language, and, not least, to any variety of English learned as a second or foreign language.

APPENDIX THREE

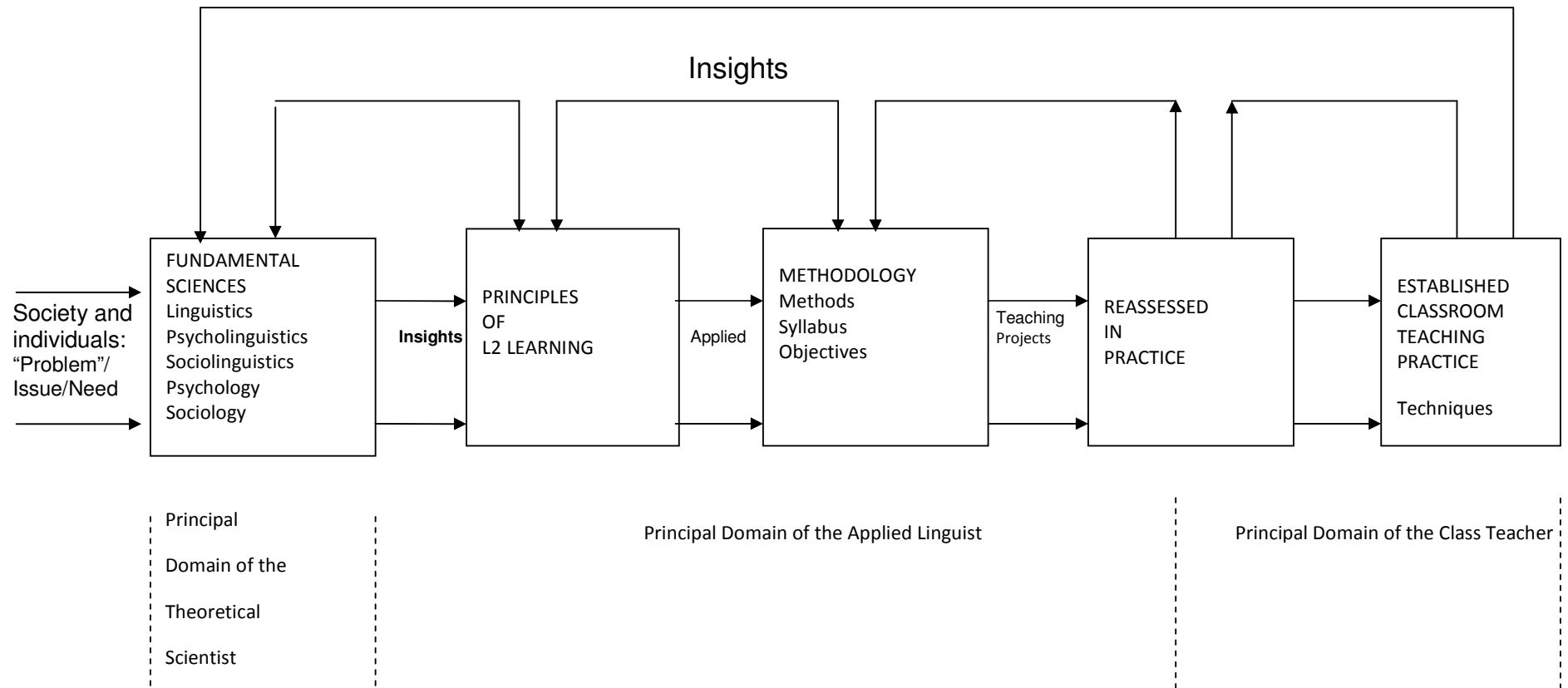
Excerpts from the *International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR®)*

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF LANGUAGE BEHAVIOUR	EXAMPLES OF LANGUAGE BEHAVIOUR	COMMENT
<p>S:4 'VOCATIONAL' PROFICIENCY</p> <p>Able to perform very effectively in almost all situations pertinent to social and community life and everyday commerce and recreation, and generally in almost all situations pertinent to own 'vocational' fields.</p> <p>The learner conveys his/her desired meaning in straightforward conversations, interviews, discussions and monologues with virtually the same fluency, precision and complexity, and to virtually the same depth as do native speakers of the same sociocultural variety. Usually needs no more support from the context to communicate than a native speaker does. The learner may for a short time in some situations produce language which is indistinguishable from that of native-speaking peers. In very complex texts, however, has less control of the argument than such peers do. Rhetorical structure in such texts may at times be non-standard, particularly in less familiar situation types. No grammatical structures are missing from the learner's repertoire; errors of grammar are fairly rare, and are often picked up in a monitoring process and corrected immediately. Errors never interfere with understanding, although there may be occasional lapses in the use of cohesive devices (typically when the referent is well separated) which may momentarily distract listeners. Vocabulary range is close to that of a similarly educated native speaker and allows for some stylistic variation for aesthetic purposes (e.g. for euphony). High- and medium-frequency colloquial and idiomatic forms are secure but some non- or misuse of other items occurs. Is secure in the use of borrowings (from other languages or other varieties) that are in high- and medium-frequency use in the speech of native-speaking peers. There may be an obvious 'foreign' accent, but this in no way impedes comprehension by a native speaker of the same or a similar variety. Has considerable sensitivity to register requirements. There are, however, occasional minor lapses in terms of appropriateness of expression (e.g. inappropriate influences of written text) and, particularly in less familiar situation types, in terms of what meanings may be (directly) expressed. Such lapses do not confuse interlocutors, and do not generally <i>per se</i> offend native-speaking peers.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>VERSION FOR ENGLISH</i></p> <p>Can take on <i>community</i> roles which are linguistically demanding (e.g. organising and leading a delegation of parents to lobby a parliamentary representative about a problem at school).</p> <p>Copes with all spoken aspects of '<i>vocational</i>' roles requiring specialised skills, except a very select few where the highest level of mastery of the linguistic and cultural systems is essential (e.g. top-level diplomatic negotiating or interpreting into English). In many educational systems, learners at this level are considered sufficiently proficient to be responsible for teaching English (and other areas of the curriculum) to native-speaking children.</p> <p>In <i>work</i> situations, can make a product presentation and respond in depth to technical questions. Can negotiate contracts and other important agreements. Can handle complicated complaints from a customer or colleague about a product or service. Can tailor language to an audience of a very different level of technical knowledge, sophistication or maturity (e.g. a teacher talking to young students).</p> <p>Can give a presentation at an <i>academic</i> conference or seminar, and respond in depth to questions from the audience, integrating references to handouts, visual aids or previous points made by self or others. Can convey own precise opinions in a seminar or symposium, and use modal forms effectively to temper comments about input from (native-speaking) peers.</p> <p>There are occasional localised errors in forms such as articles and prepositions, particularly when the learner is tired or under stress.</p> <p>In most straightforward situations in everyday life and own '<i>vocational</i>' field(s), can convey meaning accurately and fluently in informal consecutive interpreting from L₁.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>See also NOTES and GLOSSARY</i></p> <p>A key factor at this level is a high degree of mastery of the specialised language of learners' '<i>vocational</i>' field(s) (with a high degree of flexibility, permitting communication with lay people).</p> <p>The learner will perform 'very effectively' in 'almost all situations' pertinent to his/her '<i>vocational</i>' field(s) unless a major field happens to be one of the 'very select few' which feature tasks which demand the highest level of mastery of the linguistic and cultural systems (see the <i>EXAMPLES</i> column on this page).</p> <p>The range of straightforward everyday situation types in which learners can perform effectively is very close to that of native speaking peers; flexibility when confronted with new situation types is close to that of such native speakers.</p> <p>Any mismatch between what learners convey through their speaking in English (with accompanying non-verbal communication) and their intentions and self-image is rarely attributable to L₂ developmental factors (but note reference to accent below).</p> <p>At this level, grammatical development is almost complete. Errors occur in complex texts and/or when the context is very distracting (for example, when significant extra-linguistic processing is required or the learner is very tired or emotional). Learners will, however, often hear and correct such errors. A high proportion of grammatical mistakes made are not systematic errors but the kinds of slips that native speakers make (see the W:4 <i>COMMENT</i> column). The lexicon is much greater than at the previous described level.</p> <p>Strength of accent will depend on individual factors (e.g. personality and musicality) and on the L₁ and the age at which the learner was exposed to English. If the L₁ phonological system is very different from that of English, and there was no significant exposure pre-puberty, it is likely that the accent will be fairly strong, although not, at this level, strong enough to interfere with understanding. Some learners at this level have an accent often associated by native speakers with learners of a different sociocultural variety.</p> <p>For comment on 'borrowings', see the S:5 <i>COMMENT</i> column. For comment on progress beyond this level, see the L:4 <i>COMMENT</i> column.</p>

W:1 <i>GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF LANGUAGE BEHAVIOUR</i> BASIC TRANSACTIONAL PROFICIENCY	<i>EXAMPLES OF LANGUAGE BEHAVIOUR</i>	<i>COMMENT</i>
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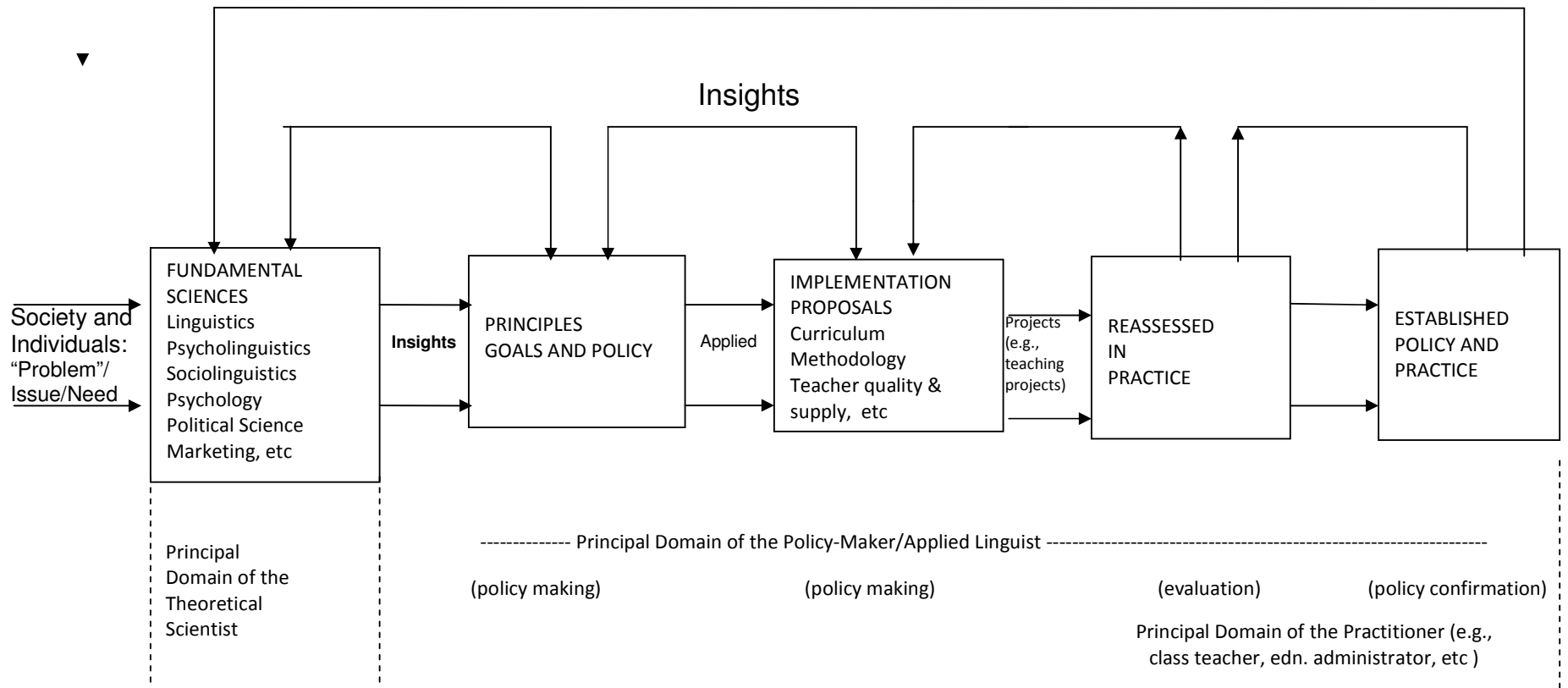
<p>Able to satisfy own basic everyday transactional needs. Provided there is support from the context, the learner can write very short series of original sentences directly related to own basic transactional needs or on very familiar topics. Can generally be understood in such situation types by sympathetic and/or experienced members of the general public. Uses a variety of functions, including giving and seeking factual information, suasion, and (very tentatively) asking about and expressing emotional attitudes. Information conveyed is usually very imprecise, however, because of the tentative state of grammatical development, with little or no use of modifiers. Uses only the most basic, high-frequency connectives; any extended discourse is largely a series of discrete sentences, relying on the context to provide coherence. Sentence 'frames' are complete, but typically are short and unelaborated. Grammatical errors may often cause or contribute to misunderstanding in less supportive contexts. Word order is strongly influenced by L₁ and there may be gaps in a sentence. Many basic cohesive devices are misused or omitted. The range of vocabulary demonstrated in actual purposeful language use is limited to that necessary to express basic needs and interests. Writes most words needed for the task types indicated with sufficient accuracy that they are recognisable; where individual words are not understood, the sentence meaning can usually be worked out from the context. Copies sentences related to basic transactional needs quite accurately. The influence of sociocultural factors from L₁ is strong. Register flexibility is extremely tentative.</p> <p>May use some items pertinent to specialised aspects of a register (e.g. in own 'vocational' field) if situations featuring such items have been sufficiently experienced.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>VERSION FOR ENGLISH</i></p> <p>Can write simple instructions related to transactions (e.g. delivery instructions or instructions to door-to-door vendors).</p> <p>With support from the context, can convey a simple message to a friend (e.g. an annotation on the advertisement for a function to suggest attending it together, or a note to advise the person of own inability to keep an appointment).</p> <p>Provided key vocabulary is familiar, or a bilingual dictionary or other supporting material can be drawn on, can write a short, very simple recount of a personal experience (e.g. on a postcard to a friend) or a report on a routine operation in the workplace (e.g. an annotation on a despatch or delivery docket about discrepancies).</p> <p>Can take down in dictation simple information (e.g. appointment details, including time of day, day and date; address and/or person to see).</p> <p>Can copy from written text quite accurately the sorts of information needed for basic transactional needs.</p> <p>Original sentences consist of little more than subject (phrase rarely exceeding three words), verb and object/complement/adverbial phrase (phrase rarely exceeding three words).</p> <p>Nouns and verbs are often uninflected. Modals are generally limited to <i>can</i>; <i>must</i>; <i>will</i> (signifying future). Negation may be signalled by the simple addition of <i>no</i> or of <i>not</i> without the auxiliary verb.</p> <p>Uses the most basic, high-frequency connectives (e.g. <i>and</i>; <i>but</i>; <i>so</i>).</p> <p>Register flexibility is limited to crude differentiations in basic courtesy forms such as greetings.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>See also NOTES and GLOSSARY</i></p> <p>By this level, 'creative' language use is established. There are original collocations of words, which, while they may be very non-standard, have all the parts needed to be considered sentences (e.g. subject, verb, object). Learners can, therefore, express basic unpredictable needs within familiar situation types, those regularly encountered in, for example, shopping, commuting, work or school.</p> <p>There is, however, little or no use of modifying devices, those forms (e.g. verbs, adjectives, adverbs, phrases, clauses) that permit elaboration and qualification of the expression of ideas. Learners are, therefore, largely restricted to conveying 'universal' or stereotypic meanings and can not use English as a vehicle for expressing their own personality.</p> <p>Needs will differ according to whether the learner is living in an English-speaking environment or using the language in a 'foreign language' environment (e.g. with expatriate English speakers). Participation in an English language course creates its own 'needs'.</p> <p>'Experienced' in this context means 'used to communicating with non-native speakers'.</p> <p>'Suasion' covers a group of functions to do with 'getting things done'.</p> <p>Sentences at this level are 'simple' in the non-technical sense. Occasional sentences could technically be 'compound' in the sense of having two clauses in a simple co-ordinate relationship. Any attempt to produce original sentences with subordinate clauses often results in a confusion of sentence boundaries.</p> <p>For comment on the influence of sociocultural factors, see the W:0+ <i>COMMENT</i> column and the reference to using second person pronouns and persons' names in the S:1+ <i>COMMENT</i> column.</p> <p>The level of register sensitivity and flexibility is such that, if there is any use of items of specialised language learned as a result of, for example, work or school, learners are likely to have no awareness of the degree of technicality and the restricted applicability of this language.</p>
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Figure 1: A Model of Applied Linguistics
(in the context of language teaching practice)



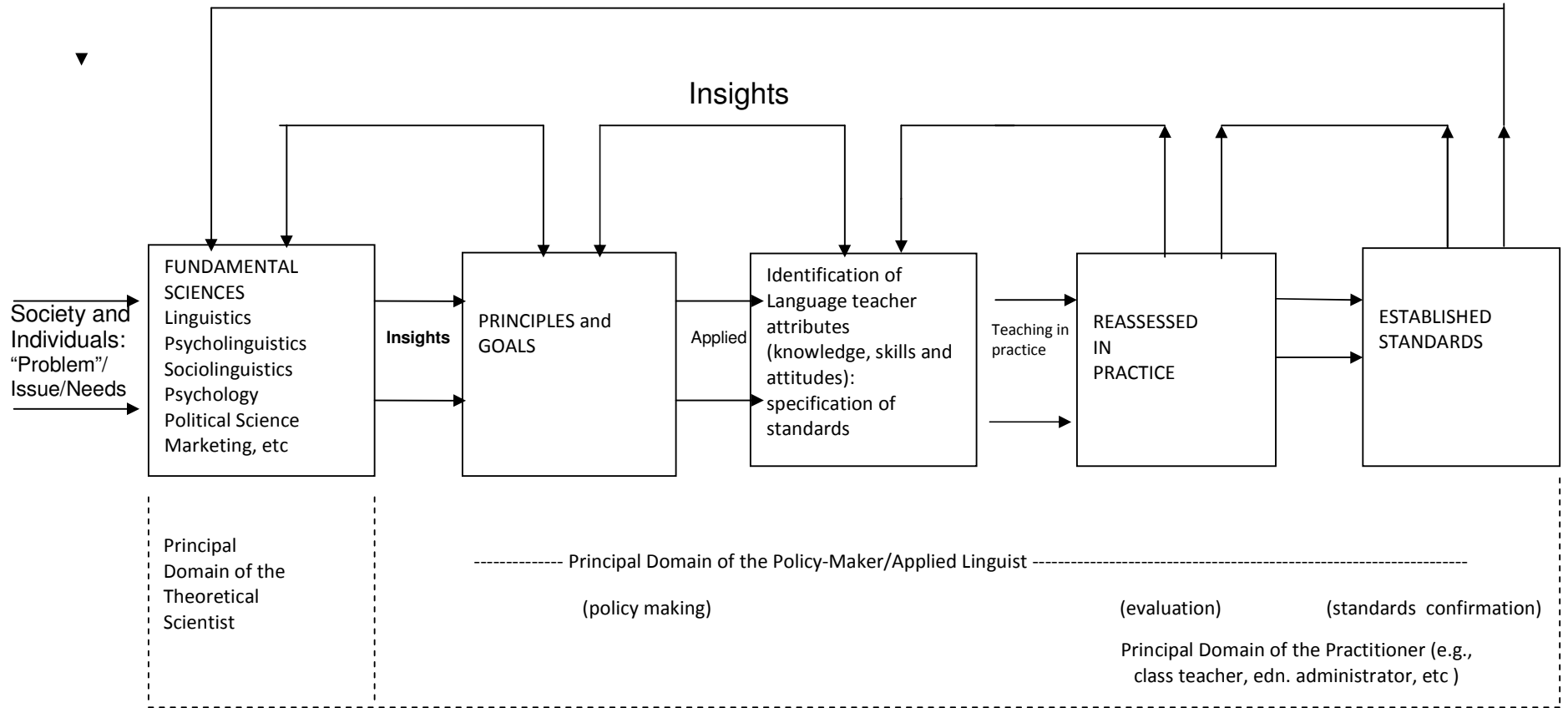
(Based on Ingram 1980:42)

Figure 2: A Model for Language Policy-Making and Language Education Planning



(Based on Ingram 1980:42)

Figure 3: A Model for the Development of Language Teacher Standards



(Based on Ingram 1980:42)